Civil Rights History Project
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Interviewee:	Gloria Claudette Grinnell
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Interviewer:	David Cline
Videographer:	John Bishop
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David Cline: Okay. Oh, and I will—I'll tell you that there'll be times when we reach sort of natural pausing spots, because these are digital files, we'll stop to just save the files so they don't get too long.

Gloria Claudette Grinnell: Okay.

David Cline: That's the one little interruption that we'll need to do.

John Bishop: [We're rolling].

David Cline: Okay. And I'll start just by giving an introduction for the tape, and then we'll just launch right in.

Gloria Claudette Grinnell: Okay. Alright.

David Cline: Today is Sunday, April fourteenth, 2013. This is David Cline for the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Smithsonian Institute's Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Library of

Congress. And, again, this is David Cline, interviewer. I'm here with John Bishop, videographer, and very happy to have with us today Gloria Claudette Grinnell. And thank you so much for being part of this project. We very much appreciate it.

Gloria Claudette Grinnell: Thank you for coming.

DC: So, if I could ask you, if we could just start with your childhood, if you could tell us a little bit about your family and where you were raised and the environment that you came out of.

GG: Okay. I'll go back to my grandparents, if I may, because in a way it was a civil rights type activity. My grandfather—these are stories that were told to me. And I asked my cousin about it, because he is older than I, and he says it's true. My grandfather had five hundred dollars invested in the stock market and, of course, he lost it. This was when people were jumping out the window and so forth.

And my grandparents were teachers. I think he taught languages and music, and I don't know what my grandmother taught. But they moved from Virginia to Philadelphia, and that started the family—split the family—because my grandparents couldn't get a job. They said they didn't hire black teachers in Philly. They had black children going to integrated schools, but no black teachers. So, my grandmother took in washing, and my grandfather refused to do that type work. And the family actually split. They were together physically but not together.

The older kids went to college in the family, and they were teachers, the two oldest ones. The youngest kid was sent to school by the middle children, who did not go to college. They had to work to help pay. So, [sighs] that again, here we go about the color line thing, yeah.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I was born in D.C. My mother was born in Virginia. My dad was born in Maryland. And when I was three—oh, my parents divorced when I was a baby, and my dad took the boy, and my mother took the girl and remarried, moved to San Francisco. So, from the age of three on, I grew up in San Francisco. Then, she remarried again and moved to San Diego, and I ended up at Virginia Union, yeah, which one of my great-great-grandparents was on the board at Virginia Seminary. And it was great to know that my great-great-grandparent had helped to start the school.

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Right. So, if we could talk a little bit more about your childhood, growing up on the West Coast before you went to experience Virginia, right?

GG: Um-hmm.

DC: And what were the sort of racial dynamics of life in both southern and also northern California?

GG: Okay, growing up in San Francisco, I lived in what is now called the West End. It was called Fillmore back in those days. It's where—you know, and I try to think, "Was it full of black people?" I think as a child, you probably don't even know. And I guess that's where the black people lived.

Then, we moved to the Presidio, and I went to St. Dominic's on Pine and Steiner. You know where that is. It was all white. I was the only black child. And every day I used to pray, "I hope the nun doesn't slap me this morning." She would walk down, as we were praying outside in the morning, and slap me. And I would pray to God, "God, I've done something wrong. Please help me!" You know, I didn't know what I had done wrong.

DC: Right.

GG: Never did! And I used to get Fs. All my papers were Fs. I was in the second grade or third grade. And my mother said, "You need to bring your papers home," and I started crying. She said, "What's wrong?" I said, "Mama, I'm dumb. I get all Fs." [0:05:00] She said, "That's okay. Bring them home anyway."

She collected that many papers, about an inch, and marched me up to the school. And she says, "Why are these marked wrong? There's nothing wrong on most of the papers." I didn't know I was bright.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: And the nun started crying. And Mama said, "Go outside and play." And I said, "Mama, I'm not allowed to play. I have to go to church during recess and lunch."

DC: While the other kids were out playing?

GG: Yeah. And my mother says, "I think you better go outside." I don't know what she said to the nun, but after that, the smartest girl and I in class were vying for grades. And the nun stopped slapping me. I didn't tell my mother she slapped me.

DC: [inaudible]

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah.

GG: So, that was my experience there. I went to a public school first called Presidio. And a little boy said, a little white boy, a little boy said that he couldn't hold my hand because his mother said he couldn't hold the hand of niggers. So, I went home and asked my mother was I a nigger, because I didn't know. You know? I knew it was something bad—

DC: Right.

GG: Because he said he couldn't hold my hand.

DC: And that was probably the first time you had heard that term.

GG: Yeah. Yeah. That was my experience there. I had heard of other experiences. I remember we owned a Mom and Pop's grocery store, which is typical in San Francisco. You know, they have Safeway, but generally you have little stores. And a man came in. And my parents never talked in front of me, but I heard them whispering that he's a teacher, but he can only substitute because he has a dishonorable discharge, because during World War II he jumped off a ship, refusing to fight, because he said why should he fight for America, freeing other countries, when he's not free here. I remember them saying that.

DC: Hmm.

GG: Yeah. And then, I remember my mother trying to get a job. And they told her, "You join the union first and you can get the job." And the union says, "Get the job first," and, you know, vice-versa. This went on, and I remember my mother crying, but not in front of us. But I do remember. So, little things, subtle things, you know.

DC: Right.

GG: You know, Santa Monica had a big rope across their beach.

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah. Unofficially.

DC: Right.

GG: But it's there.

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah. Teaching jobs.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Only teach in the black area. You know, I mean, it was there. It's still there.

DC: Um-hmm. So, when—had your parents at all prepared you for what it would be like, [laughs] as you got ready to go across the country?

GG: Heck, no! Nobody could prepare you! [Laughter] Do you know the first thing I did when I got in town? I sat down at the soda fountain. I said, "Gee, I want a banana split!" I'll never forget this. "One strawberry, one vanilla, and if you don't have black walnut, please put another strawberry, no chocolate, and strawberry served on top, and whipped cream," and that's—I'd always get that.

The lady went away to make it. And she came back and she says, "Oh, we can't serve you." And I said, "Oh, are you out?" [Laughs] She says, "No." And I said, "Oh!" I remember saying, "Oh! Oh!" I said, "Oh!" three times. It shocked me. You know, I couldn't get a banana split because I'm black, sitting at the counter.

DC: Right.

GG: I wasn't thinking. I knew you couldn't, but I wasn't thinking. I just sat down.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Had you had experiences like that in California?

GG: They are overt, not covert.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: You can feel them.

DC: Hmm.

GG: You know.

DC: But there it was just—

GG: Well, I have been asked—when I went to high school, my cousin was Filipino. And she says, "Claudette, I want you—" my middle name is Claudette.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: "Claudette, I want you to come with me to the Filipino picnic." I said, "No! I'm not Filipino." I said, "You are." She says, "Come with me!" So, I went and I took my date. And when we got to the place outside of San Francisco, the guy said on the gate, "I have to let you in. Are you sure you want to come?" So, I've had that type thing.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Or places in—"You people can come in. Do you think you're going to be happy?"

DC: Hmm. Interesting.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, kind of coded or presented in a different way.

GG: Right, right.

DC: May I ask why you decided to go to a traditionally black college?

GG: Yeah. My mother thought it would be good for me.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah. But, you know, I think a black—I think I should have gone to Howard. [0:10:00] I mean, don't get me wrong. Virginia Union was great, but I should have been in a city. [Laughter] You know?

DC: Yeah, yeah.

GG: Because it was too much learning at one time.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Being in the South and the mentality and—

DC: So, what was that like? I know you talked about the ice cream parlor. But what was the indoctrination to life there?

GG: Well, I didn't like anybody, the black people and the white people. First of all, I was young and I thought I knew everything, and I didn't. I didn't know anything.

DC: And this is what year that you got there?

GG: In the fifties, '59, around then.

DC: Okay, yeah.

GG: But, you know, as a young person, you're very ignorant, but you don't know it. [Laughs] And I thought I knew everything. And when I went there, I couldn't understand why the white people treated the blacks the way they were treated, and why the blacks allowed it. I even got angry with some of the black people for not sitting in, the kids. And I didn't understand. I do now. If they had sat in, they wouldn't have had dinner on the table that night, because their parents would have been fired. I had no idea, you know.

DC: Um-hmm. So, what was Virginia Union like, in terms of a sort of a consciousness, a black consciousness, among the students? Or, even, were there teachers that were talking about these issues?

GG: Yeah. You know, I believe people—it was a way of life, and they knew how to live within the system. I'm not saying it was comfortable for them, but I think they had a black society, which was a way of living, you know.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I remember Dr. Johnson, who was my favorite instructor there, Bob Johnson. He had two PhDs, I think. I think he got his first when he was eighteen, I'm not sure, very bright man. He used to play in a quartet. I don't know what he played, violin, or something. He said one

night he was driving home—he used to tell jokes in class—and he had this white woman in the car. Then, he thought, "Oh, my God! I'm going to be killed!" You know, he was always saying things like that.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: But I don't know. I don't remember. I'm so daggone old, I don't remember. [Laughter]

DC: So, I'm going to be asking you questions about the sit-ins that you got involved in, obviously. But I was sort of curious about what prefigured those, what kind of conversations you may have been having amongst yourselves as students.

GG: Yeah. We were having meetings. And, as you know, Charles and—what's his name?—[Tony Pinkett], I think, were the leaders. And we were always having meetings about that.

DC: That's Charles Sherrod, is it?

GG: Yeah, um-hmm.

DC: And can you remember what some of those meetings were like?

GG: No, I can't. I'm telling you, being old is a son-of-a-gun. [Laughter]

DC: Right. But—

GG: I thought the world was going to change, though. I was so naive. Gosh! I remember the police person was very nice to me. I remember when we were arrested, he held my hand and helped me up into the paddy wagon. And I thought that was so nice. And my aunt called me. She says, "I see you on the news! You're being helped into the paddy wagon."

DC: You mentioned that there were some students who didn't participate and you were angry at.

GG: I was angry with them because I felt they lived in Virginia. They should. But then, after meeting—I met one girl at the reunion.

I'm cold and I'm kind of freezing. Can you stop a minute? Yeah.

[Recording stops and then resumes]

JB: [Okay, we're back].

DC: Okay.

GG: Okay.

DC: Great.

GG: I met a lady at the fiftieth-year reunion. Well, she was in the sit-ins, so evidently I knew her, but I didn't. They needed pictures. I didn't remember anyone. They needed pictures of when they were young.

DC: Right.

GG: Because I haven't seen these people in fifty years. And we were sitting at the table, and tears were coming down her eyes. I felt like crying, too, but I don't cry in front of people. And she said that her father was fired, they had to move out of state, she had to drop out of school. I don't know if she ever finished college.

And I thought, "You know, that's how naive I was." She was one of the Virginia people. A few people from Virginia were in the sit-ins. Well, quite a few, I'm sure. But I wanted all of them to be in there. But I didn't live in Virginia. [Laughs] My parents were in California, you know.

DC: Um-hmm. You talked about thinking you were going to change the world. What did you want to change? [0:15:00]

GG: Well, I thought, "I know that we're not all going to be, you know, hunky-dory." But I thought, "Well, it's going to be integration." You know, it's not going to—the first thing I did, I remember, when we got arrested, we went to a courthouse—I mean, I'm sorry, went to jail. And they put us in this cell, all of us, and it was smelly. And I thought, "Doggone it, not even a clean cell can you go in."

And then, in the court, the court was segregated. I felt like, "Am I in hell? What has happened?" I mean, even the *courts* are segregated? And then, I remember a black man came in, and he was a drunkard, and you could smell him. And I thought, "Why do the dredges have to come in?" You know, I'm thinking, "It's going downhill fast!" And I thought, "Am I losing my mind?" You know, horrible.

DC: Yeah, yeah.

GG: But I just thought, "Okay, now that we sat in, we have these attorneys. And they're going to go to court, and everything is going to be right, and it's not going to be any longer!" But you can change laws, but you can't change people. That comes about through your doing individually.

DC: Um-hmm. And that's—what kind of process is that [thinking]?

GG: What do you think? [Laughter]

DC: Oh, well, [longer]. [Laughs] Yeah.

GG: [Laughs] You know, I think—well, the young kids today, many of them didn't grow up during that era, thank God. And many of them, if you get angry with anyone, it's angry not because of a person's color, it's for some other reason. And I think that's great. Many of the kids are that way today.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah. I mean, you still have—you're going to always have an upper dog and a lower dog, you know.

DC: Um-hmm.

JB: How long [inaudible]?

GG: I don't remember. You're asking me difficult questions. [Laughs]

DC: [Laughs]

JB: [This is just the pre-exam].

GG: I'm sorry. Really, I don't remember. Yeah. In fact, I was surprised that it was so important.

DC: Hmm.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Well, this would have been—so, the sit-in at Virginia Union was—or with Virginia Union students was about, I believe, about three weeks after the one in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February first.

GG: Okay.

DC: And so, it would have been one of the early ones, but part of the wave of sit-ins. Do you know if you were aware of where, you know—

GG: Other sit-ins? Yeah.

DC: Other sit-ins?

GG: Yeah, yeah.

DC: Or why did this come up as a strategy for you all?

GG: Yeah. I don't—honest to Pete, I really don't remember.

DC: But you were aware of there being others?

GG: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

DC: What about the notion of nonviolence and how you were going to comport yourselves in what could potentially be dangerous situations?

GG: Yeah, I was going to be a nonviolent person. I'm not a violent person anyway, just my mouth, unfortunately. [Laughs] I thought, "It's not fair to have people hit you, and you can't really protect yourself. It's really not fair." I think had I been a man, I probably would have been angry and retaliated. I don't know that, but maybe.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah.

DC: And was there—were there—?

GG: No, no! No, no!

DC: Did you run into trouble at the sit-ins?

GG: The dogs and things, but it was fine. When I say it was fine, our sit-ins were calm compared to some other sit-ins in other cities and states.

JB: Well, what actually happened [inaudible]?

GG: Oh, we went downtown several days and we went to Thalhimer's department store and we sat down—well, I didn't sit down. I was standing, but being so tall, they pointed me out, really and truly, you know, because I stand out, and I had on high heel shoes, too, so that made me over six feet tall. And they just wouldn't serve us. I mean, it was relatively calm, compared to what I've seen on the news and talked with other people.

DC: Um-hmm. How many students were involved?

GG: Thirty-four.

DC: Um-hmm. And you went—were you arrested right away, or did it take a little longer?

GG: We walked. The first time we weren't. The second time we were. We walked from school to downtown. It was kind of a—I hate to say this, but a jovial mood, you know, a lot of kids walking together, and I guess we're all going to change the world, you know.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I don't know how they felt, but that's the attitude that I had and the feeling that I had.

DC: Right, right. [0:20:00] Were there songs being sung or anything like that?

GG: Yeah, yeah. And don't ask me the names of them, okay? [Laughs]

DC: [Laughs] Yeah.

GG: Not only that, I had to learn black culture. Not that I—you know, I had to learn the black songs. Growing up a Catholic—which I'm no longer—growing up a Catholic, you don't know those songs. I had never heard the "Black National Anthem" before in my life. A lot of things I had to learn.

I remember I went to—Adam Clayton Powell was a big man, and he and my uncle worked together, too. And he came to town to talk. And I went to one of his meetings, civil rights meetings. And in the church, the people clapped [claps twice] and they banged their feet like this, and it scared me, because I had—well, I don't want this on the thing.

JB: [inaudible]

GG: Okay. I had never been in a whole group of black people. And can you imagine, I'm black and I'm scared? I mean, that doesn't make good sense. You know?

DC: But you had never experienced this before.

GG: No, no.

DC: Yeah. So, you said earlier that when you first got to Virginia, and there was this sort of not liking the black people, not liking the white people.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Did this change for you as you were there longer?

GG: Yeah, I—I got a better understanding of what was happening. You know? But the black people had to live there. And the white people were only going along with the status quo. And I—yeah, I knew I was getting the hell out of there.

DC: As soon as you could, or—?

GG: Yeah, as soon as I could! [Laughs]

DC: [Laughs]

GG: Yeah.

DC: And why was that?

GG: Because I didn't like Virginia. And I shouldn't say that on camera, because Virginia has many fine qualities. I have to put that [point] in there. I was too immature to really appreciate what was happening.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I was too immature. Yeah.

DC: Did you ever experience other parts of the South, or the Deep South?

GG: No. No, that was enough.

DC: That was enough?

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. [Laughter] We're jumping around a little bit, but I want to follow this. When you finished at Virginia—you graduated?

GG: Um-hmm.

DC: And then, where did you go from there? You said you wanted—

GG: You mean school-wise or city-wise?

DC: I'm just following up on you saying you wanted to get the hell out. I was curious if you went—

GG: I went to D.C. My dad lived in D.C.

DC: Yeah.

GG: And I had a little boyfriend—well, a young man, boyfriend. And my mother kept saying, "Come back to California." And I said, "Mama, when I go back, I'm not going back to San Diego. It's too country." San Diego is flat. I said, "I'm going home to San Francisco." She says, "Claudette, please come back." She says, "I'll tell you what. I'll pay your way back, and if you don't like it, you can go back to D.C., or San Francisco."

Well, I came back and started partying. I'm a kid! I'm partying. And then, I got a job. So, I was stuck there for two years, another city I didn't like. Then, I moved to L.A., because I'm partying in L.A. I have friends there. This is during the summertime. I love dancing. And I thought, "I'll dance all summer, go to all these parties, and then, I'll go up to San Francisco and get a job." Well, I never did, because I waited too late! [Laughter] So, I got stuck in L.A.

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

DC: And that's where you stayed.

GG: Uh-huh.

DC: Yeah. And what did you end up doing for work?

GG: My last job was [AB 9], Assembly Bill 922, which is an expulsion counselor for L.A., Los Angeles Unified School District.

DC: Okay.

GG: LAUSD, yeah.

DC: So, did you work for the schools for most of your career then?

GG: Well, I taught people working for masters. You know I have a doctorate in human behavior?

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: So, I taught graduate students career psychology at Cal Lutheran and Mount St. Mary's.

DC: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Where did you do your graduate work?

GG: At [USAU] San Diego.

DC: Okay. So, back to California! [Laughs]

GG: Yeah, well, my masters at USC. [Laughs] Yeah, I'm a California person.

DC: Yeah. So, what—I do want to ask more details about the sit-ins, but let's stay in California for a moment.

GG: Okay.

DC: What did that experience that you went through there, both as a student and just experiencing that side of Jim Crow that was kind of different from, maybe, from where you were

raised, and then going through the sit-ins there and all that, and coming back, what did you take away from that? What did you bring back to California?

GG: That the wheels of justice turn slowly. [Laughs] Really and truly, it's slowly, [0:25:00] you know. And I often thought: Would I do it again? Yeah, I would do it again. I would do it again. Yeah.

It did hurt me job-wise. I went for a job in D.C., and the guy said, "I have to hire you, because you made a high score on the exam. But I don't think you would be happy here." He says, "I see you've been involved in civil rights," because I always put down that I have an arrest record.

And then, for LAUSD, I took the written exam ten times, never flunked the written. They flunked me on the T&E, the training and experience. So, I was working for the county school district before I came to LAUSD. And I asked the superintendent of the county—he liked me as a person—I said, "Mr. [Tolen], can you find out why they won't hire me in L.A.?" And he did. He says, "You have an arrest record for sit-ins, and they think you're going to be a problem."

And I finally got in, because somebody mistakenly sent me a contract. [Laughs] I think it was my guardian angel. I really do. I think somebody saw what was happening—I'm just guessing—maybe a black secretary, and sent the paper out.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: So, it's there. You want to talk more about the sit-ins, and I guess I don't talk a lot about it because I think in my—I think I've suppressed that. It was uncomfortable, very uncomfortable, and it hurts to this day.

DC: What is it about it, do you think?

GG: Because—it hurts because many people's attitudes have not changed, you know, on both sides. And also, when I see these black kids not going to school, [it] hurts me to my heart. Not voting! You know, don't they realize? They need an education. They have to vote. And many of them are not doing it. And I want to cry. You know, I really want to cry.

DC: Yeah, you told me before we started that thinking back to these times made you feel very emotional. I was wondering what exactly you were thinking about.

GG: Yeah, the whole thing in life, but the way the situation is today. And also, with Obama being President, many feelings have come to surface, many of what *other* people feel have come to surface in a negative fashion. And I don't like that, you know, the screaming out during sessions, calling him names, comparing him to Hitler, and so forth. And I do know you always need a top dog. I understand that. And it will be—if we get rid of race, it'll be size, height—it'll be something, color of eyes.

When my brother came back from Switzerland—he was the man behind Kissinger in the Geneva Conference.

DC: Oh, wow. Yeah.

GG: He came back and he says, "Claudette, you know," he says, "this stuff is b.s.!" I said, "What?" He says, "The racial stuff!" He says, "We have world problems!" He was really upset. He says, "We have world problems to contend with."

DC: So, you come from a family of serious achievers, it sounds like.

GG: Yeah, I do.

DC: With an emphasis on education.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Why—any insight into that? [Laughs]

GG: No. Not at all, not at all. No. [Pause] I'm glad I did.

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. In your work in the school district and as a counselor, were there racial issues that came up?

GG: Yeah. In fact, I was so angry I wrote a letter, three-page, typewritten, well, computer-written letter. And when I say it's not racial, but it was. We did expulsions for kids who brought knives, guns, drugs, and so forth. Okay, we had a hearing, and if we found this to be so, then we told you you were straight-expelled or suspended-expelled, which meant you were either kicked out of the school district or you go to a special school.

We had a kid who, without any names, of course, who was involved and very involved in drugs. But because his parents had money, he was white, they didn't kick him out. And I was so angry! And I was one of three on the committee, and I told the other two committee people, who are white, [0:30:00] I said, "You know, he's guilty." And they said, "Well, he's going to go to college." I said, "So?" "Well, we judge it on a case by case—."

I said, "Don't feed that to me! You know, that's like saying, 'Oh, you're so good. You can do that.'" I said, "Don't do that to me." I said, "The kid is guilty." So, I wrote a letter saying that inner city kids who are not going to go to college who do the same thing or not as much will be expelled.

DC: Expelled.

GG: Yeah. So, it's there.

DC: Hmm. It's so insidious, yeah.

JB: How did you feel when Obama was elected?

GG: I was elated, because he was intelligent, not because he was *only* black. I have to put black, too. Because he was intelligent, knowledgeable, and I felt he was going to do the best he could for *everyone*, you know, not just black people, *everyone!* Yeah. We can't have someone doing for one group and not the whole.

DC: Were you working for the school district during the busing period in Los Angeles?

GG: Yeah. In fact, I was on one of the committees and I asked the question, I said, "Why are you only busing the black kids?" And the person who was in charge said, "Did you hear what I said?" He shut me up. He says, "Did you hear what I said? Right now we're busing the black kids." And that was it, and he talked over me.

DC: Hmm. And that was it?

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. And that *is* how it happened.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Absolutely. I remember that.

GG: Yeah, they're the ones who had to get up early, come home late.

DC: Um-hmm, um-hmm.

GG: Drive far.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I know where I lived in L.A.—I lived in View Park, which had the number one elementary school academically in my area, because the people who lived in my area were educators, doctors, lawyers, black people mostly. And our school was [top]. My kids went to private school. [We did] the French school. But anyway, [laughs] they bused the kids from the school, and no parent would put a kid on the bus. They said, "Why should we bus our kids? Our

kids have had integrated experiences. They've gone to Europe. You know, they've been to [stores]. They don't need to go to *a* white school." Well, what the school district did was take out every other grade.

DC: Ohh.

GG: So, you *had* to bus your kid away.

DC: Right. Was that one of the reasons why you sent your kids to private school, or not?

GG: No, I just did.

DC: There were other reasons for that.

GG: I sent them to the French school. I just did. Yeah. They ended up at public school eventually.

DC: Oh, they did?

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. And which school?

GG: You know Pali?

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

DC: That's where my sister went.

GG: Oh, really?

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

DC: And had an okay experience there?

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. Okay.

GG: My kids don't see things the way I see things anyway. I mean, they have experience. My son used to be vice president of Frito-Lay, of Dr. Pepper, in marketing. And before that, he was with Frito-Lay in marketing. And I don't want to say anything about different corporations, so I won't name *the* corporation, but he hit a glass ceiling, also, which—you know.

DC: Um-hmm. Did you talk—as you were raising your own children, did you talk to them about the experiences that you had had?

GG: I did not—no. You know, my mother didn't tell me—well, she would show me these history books, and I would see and read in the history books. But she didn't want to prejudice me against people, which I can appreciate. And I didn't want to do that to my children either. I know I took them out of school, and I stayed home that day, and took—on Martin Luther King's birthday, I would take them to the museum. You know, that was the big black thing that we did, I guess. [Laughs]

DC: Before it was a national holiday?

GG: Yeah, a national holiday, yeah.

DC: Right. What about getting positive images of black people in schools and things like that? Was that happening for your children?

GG: You know, I don't think anymore than I got. Yeah. Because I—I don't think so. Hmm, no. I was on a book committee with LAUSD and I said, "Why is this page with a black person on it at the end of a chapter?" And it was Mifflin Houghton. And they said, "Because when we send the books down South, we tear that page out [0:35:00] or we don't include that page." I said, "But I've read the chapter, and it has nothing to do with the chapter." I said, "You just stuck a black person in there to sell your book."

DC: Hmm.

GG: You know?

DC: Um-hmm. I'm going to jump to sort of a big question, I guess, which is—

JB: [inaudible]

[Recording stops and then resumes?]

DC: It's a reflection question, so there's no right answer to it.

GG: Yeah, well, [my reflection is not good].

DC: [Laughs] Because the project that we're working on is on the Civil Rights Movement, right?

GG: Civil rights, yeah.

DC: And I'm just curious what—what is the Civil Rights Movement to you? Because I know it can be defined in different ways, and I'm sort of interested, being that the experiences that you had, whether you see yourself as part of it? Is it still going on? What is the Civil Rights Movement?

GG: I think today [laughs] the kids are not—especially in L.A., they're not concerned about civil rights. It's la-la land. You know, what shoes do you have on? What purse? What brand name? Whether you can rap, play ball or basketball or football, or jewelry, or a car. It's a different story, and that's black, white, green, or yellow, you know, regardless of the race. They're involved in superficial things that won't last, I don't think.

To me, you know, I moved up here and I kept my house in L.A., I said, in case they burn a cross—"they" meaning white people—burn a cross on my lawn, I'm moving. I'm too old to fight now. You know?

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: I'm moving. And, of course, they did not. They, white people, did not.

DC: But you thought that might happen? We're in Ojai, California, by the way, and you thought that might happen here?

GG: Yeah, because I had read in the papers that a black kid in high school had "nigger" printed on her locker in Ojai. You know?

DC: Not too long ago, I'm guessing.

GG: Just before we moved up.

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Right.

GG: Which wasn't too long ago. We've been here nine years.

DC: Right, right. And did that surprise—I mean, so hearing about an overt incident of racism like that in a little town like Ojai, did that surprise you, or is that sort of expected?

GG: No, it didn't surprise me. I didn't expect it, but it didn't surprise me, no.

DC: Um-hmm. And we talked about this a little bit on-camera, but I wonder if you could tell me what life is like in a town like this for an African American person?

GG: I guess it's like anything for any white person. I mean, it's a small town that closes up [clears throat] when the sun goes down. It has one block of downtown. It has a lot of boutiques that are very expensive and a lot of little restaurants. It has a theater that gets first-class movies because of all the directors that live here. It has [clears throat] two live theaters, one theater the local people play in, and the other theater I don't know who plays. I don't go to them anymore. I go to L.A. [Laughs] The clubs close at—you can go in a club and take your child and your dog. There's one club next to the movie, and it's a nice little place, you know. It's nice. It's nice, yeah. There are walking trails and horse trails.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: And the helicopters are not ghetto copters. They are private helicopters. Yeah.

DC: Um-hmm. That was one thing, I have to just say this, that we were just in Los Angeles, and I hadn't been in Los Angeles in twenty years. And it was something else to see the sky full of helicopters again. I had forgotten that.

GG: That's right, yeah. I knew how to work the projects, if I had to go in them. I knew if the helicopters were overhead, if it's too late in the day, you don't go in. You know?

DC: Um-hmm. So, did you do—in your job, did you do home visits and that kind of thing that took you into—?

GG: Not as an expulsion counselor, but before that, I was making home calls as a job in another counselor, PSA, Pupil Services [and Attendance], which expulsion was under that, PSA. But it was a different—we had I don't know how many jobs under PSA. I would make home calls, but you learn how to make home calls. You know?

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: You learn when—you knew on what we call Mother's Day, when the people got their welfare checks, you don't go in. Different days, you know.

DC: Um-hmm.

JB: [inaudible]

GG: The people weren't going to be home. They're busy. [0:40:00]

DC: So, do you think—again, this is back to, I guess—

GG: Yes, I know—

DC: Sort of looking back at civil rights [overall].

GG: Because that's what you're doing.

DC: Yeah. Where do you think we are now? Or are you—how do you feel about where we are now?

GG: I've thought about that.

DC: Yeah.

GG: I think—what do they say? The more things change, the more they stay the same. I think things are—we have code words now, you know. And it's like living in California now. It's covert. You know. So—excuse me.

But my neighbor—we go out to eat. We're going out to eat next Monday, four of us. My neighbor—oh, when I moved in here, my neighbor sent me a pie, which I thought was very nice, and another neighbor gave me some fruit. Anyway, my neighbor said, "Oh, I'm from some southern state." And she said it again, to let me know, I think, that, "Hey, I'm okay. I'm a human being," you know, because she told me that.

DC: [Trying to make a connection].

GG: Yeah. I didn't answer your question, and I have pondered that question. Where are we today? Yeah, the black kids don't have to go into education, social work, the ministry, whatever the jobs were that we could get. If you notice, you ask an old person like me, I'm seventy-three, "What did you do?" They're all in education, because that's the only thing we could do. All the black men were at the post office, you know, with degrees. Today, you can get other jobs, fortunately. I don't know how high you're going, but you can get other jobs.

DC: So, what—that's a sort of a segue, I guess. Let me ask about your graduate student experience. Were there other women in your program? Were there other black students in your program?

GG: Yeah. USC doesn't have—didn't have many blacks. But, yeah, [some] blacks. And USIU had a few, a few, you know, not many.

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah. And the experience was fine. I didn't feel any racism at all.

DC: Um-hmm. I just—and so, from that experience that you had at Virginia Union—I'm thinking especially the sit-in experience—did you, did that ever come back to you? Did you draw on that experience at all in later parts of your life?

GG: Draw on it in which way?

DC: I don't know. I'll just leave it open to you. Were there times that that came back to you, or that you took something from that experience that may have influenced where you—what you did with it?

GG: Yeah, I think it opened me to be more respectful, in my mind, of people of different cultures. I call Richmond a different culture. [Laughs] Yeah, to be respectful and to appreciate differences. We all can't be alike. And to appreciate where I am at the moment. At that time, I was so, "My God, I can't stand Richmond! Look at the people! They're backwards!" You know, I'm judging! They weren't backwards; I was backwards. You know, they were fine.

DC: What was it like for you going back for the reunion?

GG: Richmond hasn't changed. It still—it looks the same to me. And yet, they say it had. I don't know. It looked—when I saw downtown, I said, "My God, this place is the same!" I like visiting, but I like living in California. And I'm sure they're glad I'm here. [Laughter]

DC: Would you have sent your own children to historically black colleges?

GG: My son went to Union, but he didn't like it. He says, "Mom, I can't take it. It's too country." *But* he did go to Morehouse!

DC: Oh, he did?

GG: Yeah, for undergrad.

DC: Yeah.

GG: And then, that school in Carolina [I told you about] for grad.

DC: Um-hmm. Was that—going to a historically black college, was that something that you thought might be important?

GG: I wanted both my children to go, but as I told you, my daughter was only sixteen, fifteen, I think, when she started.

DC: Oh, wow.

GG: She was too young.

DC: She was young.

GG: Yeah. And my son, I think, was sixteen or seventeen, you know, too young.

DC: They went to college young.

GG: Yeah, but he was ready. She said she was too immature, but she knew she was.

DC: So, she *was* mature, [laughs] enough to know that she was immature.

GG: Yeah, yeah. Right, right. Yeah.

DC: Right.

GG: What did I take out of it? [Sighs] [0:45:00] Well, as I said, I really had my eyes opened when I went to the reunion, the fiftieth-year reunion for the sit-in people. And I had thought about it, too, about how I was so judgmental. I remember an old black lady saying to me, "Honey, why are you guys marching for this? You need to march for better jobs." And I thought, "You silly old lady!" She must have been every bit of fifty. [Laughs] You know, "Why are you

asking me this silly question?" I didn't say that to her, but I was thinking, "Oh, we're not ready yet." When are you going to be ready?

DC: Hmm. So, you—I mean, really, you're involved in very early sit-ins.

GG: Um-hmm.

DC: And did—and left Virginia Union not, I don't know, not too long after that?

GG: Well, I graduated in '62.

DC: Okay. Alright, so a couple of more years.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Did you follow what was going on in, either back in Richmond or in other parts of the South?

GG: Yeah. Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah, definitely! Yeah, in fact, I was here, which is—not quite the sit-ins, but the March on Washington, I was here. And I told my husband, "Gee, I want to go to the March on Washington!" I really did, you know. And my brother would keep me informed. He says, "Claudette, today people are meeting at the White House and planning strategy with Kennedy." I said, "You're kidding!" He says, "Yeah." [Pause] So, yeah. [Pause]

You know, I'm sorry I can't do more. You know, when you get old, I swear, your mind—they say your mind is the first thing to go. It's going! [Laughter]

DC: Not at all.

JB: [inaudible]

DC: Just to follow on that, I was thinking of—do you remember your reactions to the legislation that was passed, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act?

GG: I was *extremely* happy. Of course, it doesn't take much to make me happy now. [Laughs] You know?

DC: Um-hmm. How does that relate to what we were saying before about you can change—maybe you can change rules, but can you change hearts and minds? Did you think that those—why did you think those acts were important?

GG: Well, you know—well, as I said, first of all, you have to educate people. And maybe, hopefully, through education, people will change their way of thinking, hopefully. Maybe people will get out to vote, if they can, if they don't put—"they," I keep saying "they," the parties that be, black or white—put stumbling blocks in the way. You know, hopefully. We have so many people that don't care, [that say], "What difference does my vote make? It's not going to change anything anyway."

DC: Right. And we're in a situation just in the last few days where it seems like the Voting Rights Act might be challenged.

GG: Yeah.

DC: What's your reaction to that?

GG: [Pause] Good! Let's take it all the way up and see what happens! [Laughter] Good, good!

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah.

GG: You know, it's fine. As my uncle and my aunt said, "Let's have a good old fight!" My uncle and aunt loved knock'em down fights, legally.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Well, that brings me to another question, which is, how did your family react about your involvement in the sit-ins?

GG: Well, I called my uncle. And he used to call me "Screwball." He said "Screwball, talk to Martin M. Martin." That was the attorney handling it. That was his friend. And I talked to Attorney Martin. I said, "My uncle told me to talk to you." He said, "Who's your uncle?" I said, "J. Hugo Madison." He said, "Oh, I know him!" I said, "He says for you to take care of me." He says, "Okay, I will!" [Laughter]

And I felt very happy and giddy about the sit-ins. I didn't—it was depressing, as I said, the whole thing of being in that paddy wagon. It was not clean. And then, being in the jail wasn't clean. And then, the courtroom was segregated, and it was smelly. And the guy who came in was nasty and smelly. I just thought, "I'm losing my mind! This is hell!" I really thought I was—I didn't know what hell was at that time. [Laughs] Yeah.

DC: Um-hmm. But you said you were also giddy.

GG: Yeah, I was giddy because I'm changing the world.

DC: Right. [0:50:00]

GG: It's going to change now. I'm going to court! It's going to change! We're all going to be happy. And, you know, it was going to be—black people are going to stand up, and white people are going to be okay. I mean, we're not going to all sit down and eat ice cream together, but at least you're going to respect that I *can* sit down [here]. Yeah.

DC: Um-hmm. So, you got the support of your uncle, it sounds like.

GG: Oh, yeah, and my aunt. My aunt called me from New York.

DC: Okay. Were there others that were—?

GG: Oh, yeah, my—

DC: Fearful for you, or—?

GG: No, nobody! Nobody! My mother, my stepfather, nobody! No, um-um, not at all!

DC: So, what was the reaction you got from them and from others?

GG: Oh, they were very happy. And my uncle says, "Claudette, things are not going to change as fast as you think. It takes time. It takes time."

DC: Did you believe him? [Laughs]

GG: Yeah, because I knew he was doing that in Norfolk.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah, I believed him.

DC: Yeah. Did you feel that the family that you came from prepared you for what you got involved in, in some way?

GG: I'm sure. I'm sure. Without knowing it, you know, you give your children their values, covertly and overtly, both ways, yeah.

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah. In fact, my mother always said, "The squeaky wheel gets the attention, whether it's bad or good." So, I guess I was a squeaky wheel.

DC: Um-hmm. And have you stayed in touch with people from Virginia Union? You went to the reunion, but other than that?

GG: No. No, um-umm. Only Charles, and that was by mistake. I saw—well, not by mistake. I saw him on TV during Black History Month. And I said, "That's Charles!" And I went online and found him.

DC: Um-hmm. And had you been aware what he had been doing all these years?

GG: No, no.

JB: [What was he like? What was he like when you were—]

GG: He was my boyfriend.

DC: Aha! [Laughter]

JB: [inaudible]

DC: Now, we're getting somewhere!

GG: And he was a Baptist minister, and at that time I was a pseudo-Catholic. I went to Catholic church in Richmond, and I knelt down. And everyone came in the pew. They looked over and saw me and got up and left. I said, "Now, my faith is not that good to start out with, and you guys are not helping it any," I'm thinking, you know. And this—people are going to hate me when I say this, because I'm spiritual now, whatever that means.

So, I told the priest after Mass, I said, "You know, people came in"—when I say "people," white people—"people came in the pew where I was, and they looked over and saw me and got up and left." I said, "Then, an old lady came. There was no place to sit, and she came late and saw me. She knelt down beside me, then she saw me and got up and left." He says, "My child, pray for her." And I thought, "Well, I'm not going to church anymore. I have to pray for people? And you can't tell them, you know, during a Mass?"

DC: That was the last time you went to that church?

GG: Yeah. And, as I said, my faith wasn't too strong anyway, so it didn't take much for me to go over. [Laughs]

DC: Um-hmm. So, what was young Charles Sherrod like?

GG: He was nice. I would go with him when he preached down in the country. He had to do like an intern preaching at these country churches. And he used to say, "[Darn], you Catholic

girl." He would call me a Catholic girl. We were—when I say boyfriend-girlfriend, we weren't tight, tight, tight, but we were boyfriend-girlfriend.

DC: Um-hmm. And had you seen preaching like that before?

GG: Yeah. I went with my girlfriend in San Francisco to one of her churches. But they weren't emotional, you know, but they did sing songs, I mean, you know, songs with a beat to it.

DC: Right.

GG: Yeah. I like that now.

DC: Uh-huh. [Laughs]

GG: Yeah. [Laughs]

DC: I don't know that it would be that easy to find here in Ojai, though. [Laughs]

GG: Well, no, no. You can get it on YouTube.

DC: Yeah. [Laughter] Right, right. Well, do you have any other questions you wanted to [ask/answer]?

JB: [inaudible]

GG: Yeah, I'm sorry. My memory is really bad.

DC: No, no, it's been wonderful.

GG: I am so sorry.

DC: It's been wonderful.

JB: [inaudible] very emotional. What was the [inaudible] [that made you so emotional]?

GG: Well, I felt like I wanted to cry, because when I think about what, as they said, happened in the past, and what is happening now, I'm not too sure that we're that far from the past, [0:55:00] you know, now, with things that are—[sighs] I went online to see the insults that were hurled at Obama and I had to stop, because there were so very many of them. And *all* of

them—some of them are right out in his face. And I thought, "*Why?*" I used to think the poorer the person was, the more they would [hurl] insults, but that's not true. They can have ten PhDs and do the same thing.

And, as I said, I want to cry about my black children not voting. White kids, too, don't vote, unfortunately. Not going to school. Drugs are rampant. Ojai has a big drug problem. You know, what are we doing? What are we rearing today? Where are we going?

JB: Well, you're not alone [in those things].

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah.

GG: You know. I don't know.

DC: I'm just thinking, I mean, we're—obviously, through this project, we're in some ways celebrating the Civil Rights Movement, but we're also taking stock, I think, too. So, it's a time to reflect—

GG: Yeah.

DC: Not only on what was done and sit-ins in the 1960s, but where we are.

GG: Sometimes I don't want to reflect, because it's uncomfortable. I told my husband—ooh, I'm freezing again. I told my husband, I said, "You know, I'm not filling this paper out before I go to bed, because I won't be able to sleep," when I put my uncle down and my aunt down, thinking about the things they were involved in, and so forth.

DC: And what is it you think—about how they would respond to things now?

GG: No. I know what they *went through*, you know. I don't—I think I did tell you—maybe I—my aunt integrated the bus line, a Greyhound bus line that the courts had already said it should be *not* separate but equal, together, and they did not integrate it. It was in Virginia. And

my aunt told my mother—my mother was visiting. My aunt told my mother and another sister, "Come on, we're going to go to D.C. from Virginia, and we're going by bus." And my mother says, "Why? Let's drive!" And my aunt said, "No, we're going by bus." Mama says, "We don't want to take the Greyhound."

Anyway, they took the Greyhound. And my aunt got off and says, "You keep going to D.C. Call Hugo—that's my uncle—and call Powell, Adam Clayton Powell, because I'm going to get arrested." And she did, because she sat in the white section. But she made them—the courts made them obey the law.

DC: Um-hmm.

JB: [That is something that surprised me about the Movement was how much, once the law was in effect, how much testing of the law had to be done all over the country].

GG: Right, yeah. In fact, something was on the news recently about some little southern town, and I don't know what it was.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Did you see it? I missed it.

JB: [inaudible]

GG: Oh, yeah. But I know, even here in California, I know not to go in some cities.

DC: Today? Really?

GG: Heck, yes!

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Because you know—what kinds of things do you think would happen?

GG: Well, for example, I was going to a city, and I don't want to name the city, and I passed through a little place, canyon country, down that way. And I got lost before I had—

DC: GPS.

GG: The GPS. And my daughter was with me. I said, "We can't stop at that little club there." I said, "It looks like a little redneck club. We can't stop there." I said, "Do you know what I'm talking about?" She says, "Mom, I know!" I don't know if she knew. She said she knew. Because you can feel it, you know.

DC: Um-hmm.

GG: Yeah.

DC: And that's something that in some ways hasn't changed. I mean, I'm sure you could sense those places—

GG: Yeah.

DC: Throughout your—

GG: Right. And when you intellectualize it, you get in trouble. You have to feel it in your gut and go with your gut.

JB: [inaudible]

GG: Right. Absolutely. And that's true for man, period, in everything he does, yeah, I mean, regardless of race.

DC: Um-hmm. And in some ways, that's—you rely on a community, right, to help you through that or to navigate these things. So, in some ways, it's difficult—I would think—difficult in a place like Ojai. The community isn't that large.

GG: No. But I've felt it in Ojai. But I move one, you know. [1:00:00] You don't have to like me. That's fine. [Laughs]

DC: [Laughs] Right.

GG: Do you remember when they had the Green Book for black people for Triple-A?

DC: No, I don't.

GG: Oh, you're too young.

JB: [What's that?]

GG: When you traveled—we were little. I was little, and my parents used to go to Triple-A and get—you know how they draw the map for you? Well, they had a special book for black people where you could stay, yeah. Because when we traveled, my parents sometimes would stop at a black person's house and say, "Do you know where black people can stay?" When we traveled down South. And they would say, "Mrs. Jones has a room." And we would go there and stay overnight.

JB: [inaudible]

GG: Right. Yeah, they have no idea. Yeah. That's true.

DC: It also says a lot about, I mean, it's interesting that Triple-A sort of formalized it, but it also says a lot about how people adapt and take care of each other, too, you know, that you *could* stop at someone's house and they'd put you up, or that Mrs. Jones did put up travelers.

GG: Yeah. On the flip side, integration closed many black people's businesses.

DC: Absolutely.

GG: Yeah.

DC: Yeah.

GG: Peg Leg Bates had a place in the, um, upper New York, I can't think what it's called. People back East know it. And I heard that the black people used to go there and stay overnight

and have a good time. And it closed when integration happened. Many of the black hotels and other places closed.

DC: Um-hmm. Are there other things that you think the black community lost through integration?

GG: I think some of the black kids don't know who they are, whatever that means, "who they are," you know. My girlfriend is married to a Mexican fellow, and her kids told her, "Mom, oh, you just think that because you're black!" And, yeah, they don't know anything about her, really.

DC: Um-hmm. It also means they don't identify that way.

GG: Right, yeah.

DC: Yeah, we hear a lot of stories of, in some ways, stories of loss or even nostalgia for—

GG: The good old days—

DC: Black schools and some—

GG: Oh, black schools, um-hmm.

DC: And some of the things—yeah, looking at it as the good old days, even though, of course, there was a lot that was [laughs] very bad about it.

GG: Right. You know, speaking of black, I have written the *L.A. Times* and various other newspapers about not capitalizing the word "black." And I spelled it out why I felt it should be. I said, "'White' is generic. 'Black' is not." When you say "black," you only mean an American from Africa. You don't mean a Jamaican. You don't mean a Puerto Rican. You only mean a person in America who is black. So, it should be capitalized.

DC: You're right, yeah.

GG: And I feel that it's an insult when you see in the papers different groups of people, and then a lower-case letter for "black."

DC: Um-hmm, yeah. I agree with you, [laughs] as it turns out. Yeah, yeah.

GG: I wrote a letter—also, in that package, I have a letter that I wrote to this local paper, and I'm surprised they printed it. They talked about two black women doing something fraudulent, and should you see them, call the police. So, I wrote them a long letter. I said, "You named 'two black women.'" I said, "You have made it dangerous for me to walk downtown." No description.

DC: That's it? That was the only description?

GG: Yeah. It's in that packet.

DC: Have you written any other letters to the editor over the years, or other issues that got under your skin at all?

GG: Only about the black issue have I written to the *L.A. Times* and—I'm always writing letters—well.

DC: Yeah? [Laughs]

GG: But I write good letters, too, to compliment people, when they should be. I fell. I was riding my bicycle and I turned a corner too fast. And, for the first time, I didn't have my helmet on, and I hit my head on the fire hydrant around the corner.

DC: Ouch.

GG: And I'm down there crying like an ugly thing, just crying, and I look uglier than ugly when I cry. And two men got out of their truck. They said, "Are you okay?" And I said [speaking as though she's crying], "[inaudible]." And I'm crying, crying. One man held my hand. Then, I thought, "Oh, God! You're looking ugly. Stop crying!" So, I stopped crying.

[Laughs] But, you know, they were two white men helping a black lady, [1:05:00] or two men helping a female, for that matter, you know. So, I haven't felt anything in a while. I mean, I'm sure—as I said, if I feel anything, I move on. You know?

DC: Um-hmm. It might be wrapping up here. I feel—but do you think about that, you know, what you did at Virginia Union and being part of those protests, as something very historic that you did, of being a participant in this Movement?

GG: I do now. I didn't think it was. I thought it was something we were doing, and I was one of many people across the country. But I didn't realize it until afterwards. In fact, I didn't realize it until I was at a school. And I was in the library, and the lady says, "Dr. Grinnell, do you know anything about the Civil Rights Movement?" And I said, "Yeah, I do." I said, "I was in it." She says, "*You were?*" I thought, "It's not a big deal." You know? Then I realized, "She's young. She's a young teacher." And that's when it hit me: I guess it was a big deal. You know?

JB: [That's a great finishing line].

GG: Well, thank you.

DC: [Laughs] It was.

JB: [It was *indeed* a big deal!]

DC: Yeah.

GG: Yeah, yeah.

DC: Well, let me just ask you: Was there anything that I didn't ask that you thought I might ask or that I should have asked?

GG: No. I'll think of it later on, but it probably won't be important anyway, [laughs] so no.

DC: [Laughs] Well, thank you so much.

GG: Well, thank you.

DC: We really appreciate it.

GG: Now, I'll tell you what you have to do while you're here. Since I made a cake for you guys, you have to eat it.

DC: Oh!

JB: Oh, okay!

GG: I made a pound cake.

DC: Well—

GG: Whether you like it or not!

DC: We might be—you know.

JB: [inaudible]

DC: You've done your sacrifice—

[Recording ends at 1:06:45]

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed by Sally C. Council